

Appendix H: Summary of Public Comments

The Fort Hunter Liggett Special Resource Study process included a public comment period in August and September, 2000. The following section summarizes the issues and ideas that were contributed at public meetings and through letters and e-mail during that time.

Study area boundary

- The NPS study should be limited to the buildings and associated land declared excess by the Army
- The NPS study should examine the resources of the entire 165,000 acres of Fort Hunter Liggett

Army training mission

- There must be no negative effects on training operations
- What impacts would there be on National Guard training from Camp Roberts, or future expansion of training activities?

Visitor access

- Protect cultural resources from impacts associated with increased visitor access. There should be no access to sensitive cultural resources unless protection is guaranteed
- Provide access for elderly visitors
- Consider extending the same access privileges as those currently enjoyed by hunters and fishermen to other groups such as wildlife photographers, botanists, artists, and naturalists
- Increased access would necessitate safety measures for existing housing areas
- Cleanup up of hazardous materials and unexploded ordnance would be required
- Determine visitor carrying capacity
- Current access is limited by the Army
- Consider restoration of access through Fort Hunter Liggett along Sulfur Springs Road

Hunting and fishing interests

- Army already has partnerships with various hunting/fishing agencies and organizations
- Hunting interests wish to retain access through Los Padres National Forest
- The Army will continue to manage the hunting and fishing permits

Protection of resource values

- Much of the area between Mission San Antonio and the National Forest is oak savanna habitat, a valuable and diminishing California wildlife resource
- Long-term preservation of resources is important
- Fort Hunter Liggett is a valuable resource for researchers and scientists
- NPS should manage buildings on Jolon Road - Tidball Store, Dutton Hotel, etc.
- Jolon is a true ghost town; there is potential for re-creation of Dutton Hotel, the Dance Hall, the school, and Garcia's saloon
- The upper San Antonio River area, specifically the area of the Mission aqueduct, should be a focus of the study. The condition of the Mission aqueduct system should be assessed and interpreted
- Continued protection of archaeological sites and other cultural resources is critical - they are not a "renewable resource"
- Cultural sites are currently protected by limited access
- Information about cultural site locations must be kept secure
- The Fort Hunter Liggett Historic Preservation Plan is working - sacred sites must not be open to the public
- Concessioners should maintain scenic and cultural integrity of Hacienda and other properties
- Need to educate public about traditional uses of Fort Hunter Liggett (hunting, etc.)
- Overlapping eras of history; preservation of "Old California" versus commercialization
- The Salinan Nation will exhibit artifacts at the Tidball Store
- The whole of cultural sites is greater than the sum of the parts

Desired future conditions

- Another retail facility like the Jolon General Store is needed
- The Fire Academy can continue to use facilities
- There is high demand for Hacienda rooms, food, and souvenirs - should advertise their availability
- Housing opportunities for USFS employees are needed
- Lease excess facilities back to the Army

- Hacienda could be a stop on regional wine tour
- There is interpretive potential with the Hacienda connection to Hearst Castle
- Opportunities for schools to study history
- Roadside turnouts or wayside interpretation
- Removal of visually intrusive buildings, such as the tin barn fire station and some of the motel-style housing units; no additional buildings should be built
- Continue opportunity for hunting and fishing
- Hiking trails to connect to Los Padres National Forest
- Rehabilitate damaged lands
- Concern about drug rehabilitation and homeless shelter use of excess facilities if NPS does not take them

Mechanisms for protection

- A new model of public use of military land is needed
- Involve local people in decision making
- Partnerships with California Department of Fish and Game and US Fish and Wildlife Service are in place
- USFS has interest in former USFS lands that were transferred to Fort Hunter Liggett, if determined excess in future by the Army
- Potential for California State Parks and Recreation operation of Hacienda
- Coordination with Monterey County's proposed San Antonio Historic District Plan
- Continuation of Salinan Nation lease on the Tidball Store
- National Historic Landmark nomination of additional sites/district should be re-addressed

Management issues

- The Army has done a good job protecting resources at Fort Hunter Liggett
- What types of management possibilities will be considered in the study?
- What would "cooperative management" mean?
- What potential value would be added by a NPS presence on the base?
- Will there be any changes to the Hacienda or limitations on use? Will there be a "tie-in" with San Simeon Hearst Castle?
- Future use and management of Hacienda will require financial backing for restoration and repairs
- There are access limitations to Hacienda under the current concessionaire operation

- Future concessionaires
- Infrastructure investment is needed at Tidball Store
- Continued maintenance of excess housing
- Safety: law enforcement staff needed to support increased visitor use
- Firearms control vs. hunting activities
- Investment requirements for excess property - is this a "turn-key" operation?
- There is unexploded ordnance on the post, and there may be other hazardous materials. What are the potential clean-up costs, and who would be responsible for this?
- Will NPS operate the excess facilities?
- Who would use the excess housing and who would determine who stays there?
- Prescribed burns are effective for fire management
- Eradication program is needed for yellow starthistle
- Website for training, visitor, hunting and fishing coordination

Potential impacts

- Impacts on the local economy
- Does the NPS study include road networks and the associated pollution and congestion?
- Impacts of park designation on regional infrastructure, such as increased costs of road maintenance associated with increased visitor use
- Impacts of increased visitation on Mission San Antonio de Padua

Similarities to management of other areas

- Avoid boarding up excess buildings as at Fort Ord
- Comparison to Presidio closure: do not evict existing occupants
- Compare to other parks with historic structures and lodging
- Removal of unneeded buildings

Issues expressed but not within the scope of this study

- Access to The Indians via Arroyo Seco Road
- Monterey County has special use permits for Arroyo Seco access route
- Reconstruction of San Lucas/Lockwood Road
- Road access from Bryson to connect with road to San Simeon estate
- Road to Jolon is too steep